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ABSTRACT

An Instructional Technology Inventory was developed for the North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools to serve as an instrument for voluntary self evaluation. The inventory was developed, disseminated, and field tested by 4,500 member institutions of the NCA, and preliminary results of the field test indicated that the inventory was a useful instrument for self evaluation. Participants at the 1976 national convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology are asked to note specific aspects of the inventory (Inventory of Policy and Program for Instructional Technology, IR 003 481) and to fill out a final questionnaire evaluation of the inventory. (CH)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY INVENTORY FOR A REGIONAL ACCREDITATION ASSOCIATION

A Presentation For

THE 1976 NATIONAL CONVENTION OF
THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

March 31, 1976
Anaheim, California

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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The purpose of this presentation is to explain how the Instructional Technology Inventory, which is an instrument for voluntary self-evaluation, was developed for the North Central Association.

Before we get into this explanation, a little background information would be in order.

First, it's interesting to note that the North Central Association is the oldest and largest regional accreditation association in the world, involving over 19 states. Unlike most other regional associations, NCA has a Research and Service Commission in addition to the customary Commission on Institutions of Higher Education and Commission on Schools. Such a commission made it possible for one committee to study the integration of instructional technology into teaching and learning at all levels of education, and to develop the Instructional Technology Inventory for both of the accreditation commissions. As you might predict, the Ad Hoc Committee on Instructional Technology is composed of instructional technologists from both schools and higher education, and representatives of all three commissions.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Instructional Technology was established in 1953 as the Committee on Television, and later became the Committee on Telecommunications. It was established by the NCA Executive Committee and the Steering Committee of the Commission on Research and Service to serve the needs of both accreditation commissions.

Over the past twenty years, the two main purposes of the committee evolved into (1) keeping the constituent members of NCA informed on the development and use of instructional technology, and (2) systematically developing an instructional technology inventory for voluntary self-study into accreditation criteria and guidelines for instructional technology.

From 1953 to 1970, the committee concentrated on telecommunications and developing a relationship with NCA's two accreditation commissions. Under U.S.O.E. funding, two landmark publications in the literature of instructional technology were developed. The first, The Uses of Television in Education, resulted in nationwide distribution of over 25,000 copies in several editions; and the second, the 300-page document, The Current Status, Continuous Census, And Projected Uses Of Television For The Next Decade, was heralded as one of the first truly in-depth studies in the field of instructional technology. These two publications were the end product of over 15 regional and national conferences conducted by the committee, which also kept NCA members up to date at its open houses at the Annual Meetings.

So this bit of historical background points out that the Committee had seventeen years of experience in serving and re-

lating to the two accreditation commissions on higher education and schools before it moved into instructional technology, as most of us define it today, and as defined by the Congressional Commission on Instructional Technology in its report, To Improve Learning.

We can now turn our attention to how the committee developed The Instructional Technology Inventory.

From 1970 to 1975, the committee touched a lot of bases and put in an unbelievable amount of hard committee staff work. Some of the highlights of this five-year period are:

1. A national invitational conference in Chicago, involving chief administrative officers of over 15 national educational associations, where it was deemed appropriate for NCA to become involved in a project leading to guidelines or possible accreditation criteria for instructional technology.

2. The development of that Instructional Technology Project. Phase I, which ran five years, included the research, development, testing, drafting, publishing and field testing the Instructional Technology Inventory. Phase II would include dissemination of the Inventory and it's possible further development into actual guidelines and accreditation criteria.

3. Five all-afternoon open houses at the NCA Annual Meeting where continuing input and reaction to the developing Inventory was received from over 600 NCA college and school administrators.

4. Numerous committee meetings. There were 5 total committee meetings at the NCA Annual Meeting, 10 executive group meetings, over 50 working group meetings, and an untold number of phone calls with committee members, commission and NCA officials and other officials in national associations and other regional accreditation associations.

5. Three Thoughts Papers on Instructional Technology were developed, one on the administration of instructional technology programs, one on software development, and another on hardware systems. These papers have been distributed widely throughout the nation, along with a bibliography and summary of "To Improve Learning." Also, a committee outline of the "Instructional Technology Function;" two commissioned papers by Dr. Kenneth Oberholzer and Dr. George Bair; a synthesis of these papers; a careful study of the excellent work being done by AECT, AASL and NCATE; and a study of the instructional technology programs of the Lincoln, Nebraska, Public Schools and Pennsylvania State University resulted in the drafting of the Instructional Technology Inventory. The committee is quick to commend the publication, Media Programs For District and School, prepared by the AASL and AECT, which defines instructional technology programs far more precisely than the Committee's Instructional Technology Inventory. It is the opinion of the committee that when these two documents are used together that a sophisticated self-study of an institu-

tion's instructional technology program can be done.

6. And the sixth and final highlight is the one-year field test of the Inventory. Immediately after the 1975 annual meeting, the Instructional Technology Inventory was mailed to each of more than 4500 constituent member institutions in each of the nineteen NCA states. Also a questionnaire was sent to the 46 institutions who agreed to participate in the field test. We got a 50 percent response, and from these 21 responses, ten in-depth telephone interviews were conducted. We are in the process of completing our face-to-face interviews.

The preliminary results of our field test indicate that only minor changes are needed in the document to make it useful as an instrument for voluntary self-evaluation of school and higher education instructional technology policy statements and programs.

It also appears to have value as :

1. a personal reference;
2. for projecting future needs for instructional technology;
3. in developing instructional technology policy & program;
4. a future official NCA publication;
5. a resource in teacher-training institutions.

It already is being used in at least three colleges of education and is a prime reference in two doctoral dissertations.

This meeting is the final step in the field test of the Instructional Technology Inventory. The Commission on Research and Service and the Committee on Instructional Technology are very grateful to AECT for this contact with outstanding instructional technologists from all over the country. We would very much appreciate your completing the short questionnaire which is enclosed in the booklet. Needless to say, we would be very pleased to send you a copy of the final edition of the Inventory as soon as it is available.

At this point we have given you a little background about the committee and have discussed the evolution of the Instructional Technology Inventory over the past six years. In the remaining time let's take a look at the Inventory itself.

If you will look at the first page, you will note at the bottom that the Inventory was approved by the Commission on Research and Service on January 13, 1975. The revised edition will be submitted for NCA approval sometime in May or June of this year.

We've covered the content of the Introduction, but please note on the bottom of page ii that the booklet is divided into two main parts. The first main part is the Policy and Program Inventory itself. It is interesting to note that it contains only eight general and qualitative items. In support of the Inventory, however, is Part Two, which is a checklist of 83 specific items

related to the eight items of the Inventory.

If you turn now to the Inventory, on pages 1 and 2, you will note that all items are general and qualitative. This was done to accommodate both schools and post secondary institutions of all sizes, and with instructional technology programs of varying degrees of development. The intent of the Inventory is to positively stimulate continuing development of learning oriented instructional technology policies and programs. It is not the intent of the Inventory to embarrass an institution while it is doing a self-study of its instructional technology policy and program.

Under POLICY you will note that only three questions are asked. (1) Is there an established institution-wide policy statement on instructional technology? (2) Is the instructional technology program administered and/or coordinated by a highly qualified person at a sufficiently high level in the administration structure? (3) Does the policy statement provide for criteria to be used in the application of instructional technology to instructional (and management) goals and objectives of the institution? It is the best judgement of the committee, based on input from several hundred school and college administrators, that the most important item here is #2. In other words, the boss man of the instructional technology program needs to be plugged into the top of the institution's administrative structure so that the program truly will be used to support the instructional and administrative goals and missions of the institution. If you turn to pages 3 and 4 you will note several specific items under Administration which include suggested titles for the instructional technology administrator and an admonition that the instructional technology administrator should have authority to act on adopted policy. However, "e" on page 4, suggests that, while in large institutions the instructional technology program can be decentralized and still highly effective, it still needs to be coordinated by a single high level administrator.

On page 4, under Goals and Objectives, five good reasons for having a policy statement are listed: (a) without such a policy statement, the program runs the risk of not being integrated into the institution's ongoing instructional mission; (b) inefficient use of facilities may result if there is no priority system; (c) how the instructional technology resources, both human and nonhuman, can be concentrated in major new curriculum projects; (d) minimum software and hardware standards are defined; and (e) provision is made for ongoing commitment and support from all appropriate administrative levels after a project has been developed and proven operational.

If we turn back to page 1, you will note that in keeping with the Congressional Commission on Instructional Technology's definition of instructional technology, it is here defined as a means of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of learning and teaching, with, of course, an emphasis on learning.

On page 2, then, let's consider the second main item under PROGRAM, or the integration of instructional technology into curriculum design. If you will now turn to page 5 and item 2, three checklist items suggest that the instructional technology program should be integrated into the institution's total curriculum development program, by the instructional technology administration working with the chief academic officer, and that the plan for integration should be well known by all faculty and staff.

Let's turn to the next item on page 5, which is Budget. We have received criticism from several instructional technology administrators that we are not "flagging" the importance of budget enough and perhaps in the final edition we should strengthen this section. In any event, all of us here would agree that the institution's budget should provide regular appropriations for instructional technology personnel, instructional development projects, equipment, materials, maintenance, and other expenses, and a system for cost accounting the instructional technology function probably would be in order.

If we turn to page 2 again, the Inventory asks about Program Services, "Does the program provide instructional technology services of sufficient quality and quantity to adequately support the institution's instructional (and management) goals and objectives?" If we turn back to page 5, the checklist gets more specific about the services the program should provide. These services include procurement of materials; design/production/testing services; delivery system services; research & evaluation services; design and learning facilities; and the extremely important item of in-service training; information service; a program for the improvement of learning; a master technical plan; and utilization reports.

The checklist item regarding the procurement of materials is probably a predictable statement. Some of the items under design/production/testing services might be of special interest. These services should assist faculty to systematically develop both print and non-print instructional materials which can be validated.

The Delivery System Services item, on page 6, states the obvious. There, of course, needs to be adequate storage, retrieval, distribution, display, utilization, and feedback functions.

On page 7, under Research and Evaluation Services, it is interesting to note that both long and short range research are suggested and that the research services should include test construction, pretesting, testing, field testing, continuing evaluation of each of the instructional technology program's component parts, and provisions for linking evaluation services to design and production efforts.

Point "e" suggests that the instructional technology pro-

gram should be able to supply design, purchase and installation capability for the installation of instructional technology programs into buildings and for media hardware and software systems.

In-service Training, I am sure you would agree, is probably one of the more important program service items. Some checklist items here are (1) the program should provide regular instructional technology workshops, seminars, and in-service training programs; (2) small grants-in-aid for improvement of teaching and learning projects; (3) rotating internships for teachers and other professional staff in designing/producing/testing instructional materials; (4) the program should provide release time.

On page 8, under Information Services, the checklist suggests that teachers, staff and administrators should be made aware of current and relevant uses of instructional technology; that regular correspondence with other institutions with instructional technology programs should also be a part of this service; and that memberships in various professional associations related to instructional technology should be included in this service.

As found in many progressive institutions, the checklist suggests that Improvement of Learning Programs are an excellent way for institutions to help solve major instructional and management problems. These programs, however, should in no way eliminate the small grant program for individual teachers wishing to improve teaching and learning in their individual classrooms. Checklist item 2 suggests that these major programs should make use of specific criteria for selecting projects. Included are (a) a substantial number of students; (b) one other faculty member who will serve as a colleague consultant; (c) evidence for the improvement of instructional effectiveness and/or economy; (d) the project has a clear statement of goals; (e) systematic design and published objectives; (f) evaluation in terms of published objectives; (g) potential for improving cost effectiveness or instructional efficiency; (h) commitment from all appropriate administrative levels; (i) peer review; and (j) royalties shared with the authors.

Another important service is "i" - a Master Technical Plan. This plan should include procedures for the purchase of equipment to assure (a) compatibility of equipment; (b) ease of maintenance; (c) economy of mass purchasing; (d) suitability of equipment to prescribed needs, and (e) simplicity of operation.

And finally, the checklist suggests that the program should include utilization reports showing the frequency of use of equipment, materials and instructional technology systems.

So much then for Program Services. Let's turn now to Personnel. On page 2, item 5 asks, "Does the program provide for adequate professional, supervisory, and staff personnel -- reporting to the instructional technology administrator -- to sup-

port the instructional technology program services? On page 10, the checklist suggests that job descriptions should differentiate the responsibilities of the instructional technology team and should be updated periodically to assure the efficiency and effectiveness of the professional and paraprofessional roles. The checklist then goes on to list some of the members of the instructional technology team.

The last item included in the Inventory on page 2, is Facilities. The question asked here is, "Are the instructional technology facilities (space, equipment, distribution systems) adequate to support the instructional technology program services? The checklist on page 11 includes some of the possible kinds of facilities which are found in instructional technology programs. Interestingly enough, items "b," film libraries, and "f," regular libraries, were questioned by librarians and instructional media center directors, during the field test of this document. Their argument, of course, was that instructional media centers or modern school libraries do, indeed, now contain film libraries and are, in fact, concerned with book and non-book materials, and with procurement, production, storage, delivery, and display of these print and non-print materials. At this point the committee is not sure how to handle this problem, and we would appreciate your suggestions.

So much, then, for the discussion of the Inventory and its checklist. In conclusion, we have provided a little background information about the Committee on Instructional Technology and how it developed the Instructional Technology Inventory. We have also discussed some of the highlights of the Instructional Technology Inventory, which was gradually evolved over the past five years. Our hope would be that other regions would be able to pick up on our experience and, perhaps, develop accreditation criteria and guidelines for instructional technology more quickly than did we. We also would hope that those criteria and guidelines in one region would look very much like those in another region. And perhaps, in the not too distant future, through a close-working relationship between regional accreditation associations and such national associations as AECT, AASL, and NCATE, national benchmarks for instructional technology accreditation in schools and post secondary institutions can be developed.

Again, please fill out the simple one-page questionnaire. We very much need your input and will be happy to send you a copy of the final edition of the Inventory as soon as it is available.

On behalf of the ad hoc Committee on Instructional Technology and the NCA Commission on Research and Service, thank you very much.